

2019 Virginia SCIP Workshop

Survey Results

What level of government do you represent?	Are you a member of the SIEC?	Are you a member of a committee or working group?
Federal	No	Yes—911 Committee
State	Yes	No
Local	No	Yes
County	Yes	No
State	Yes	Yes—COMLINC
County	Yes	Yes—Region 1 RPAC-I
State	Yes	No
State	Yes	No
Federal	Yes	Yes—COMLINC
State	Yes	Yes—911 Task Force
State	Yes	No
Local	Yes	Yes
State	Yes	No
County	Yes	No
State	Yes	No
Local	Yes	No
State	Yes	No
Totals: Federal (2), State (9), Local (3), County (3)	Totals: Yes (15), No (2)	Totals: Yes (7), No (10)

What would you remove from the current SCIP and why?
Reduce content. Minimize size of SCIP
I am fine with the current content and information
Sadly, little needs to be removed as many of the issues identified in the 2013 plan are still issues to this day and still require work to finish.
Nothing
This is difficult, mostly because the SCIP is so stale...so much if it needs to be refreshed, which will likely lead to cuts and adds. That said, I think we can look at the seven "lanes" we developed in 2011 and reconsider whether they're helpful or just more thorns to get hung up in. The 2013 SCIP is very heavy on plans and deliverables, including project plans and a few annual reports. We need to aim the SCIP at something useful, but realistic.

What would you add to the current SCIP and why?
This is more of an update, but we need to add in some discussion of the current public safety broadband environment, which is quite different than in 2012-13. In a complete rewrite, we need to (re)add achievable goals we can hand out to folks statewide...a map to march along. Since the mission and vision need to change, this is an opportunity to paint a picture of the future state we want, and then have the SCIP show us how (and by what timeline) we plan to try to achieve

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that vision. We paint the future, and then identify the broad strokes to get there. Then, we annually update the SCIP to identify the ONE or TWO (max THREE) things we're going to actually DO this year to move toward the goal. We can't have tables full of work to be done. We'll fail and then get stuck.
Checklist/Action Plan/Tracker as an appendix containing goals/objectives so can be used as a standalone
Something regarding a COMLINC MOA between COMLINC users and VSP
More information on First Net, D Block, etc Also more emphasis on NIPS channels for systems and Public Safety
We need to match the SCIP to the actual resources we have available to execute the plan. The plan has changed little through the years because we have grand aspirations, but have little resources to actually accomplish those goals
Incorporate specific planned completion dates for some or all of the goals and initiatives, in order to enhance prioritization of resources and increase the likelihood of delivery of these objectives

How can public safety communications governance at the local, regional, and state level be more effective?
Ensure SWIC and SIEC are in one office
Finding a standard that applies to all and make it part of the plan to meet the listed code references
All grants for communications equipment, FCC license, Frequency request should come through RPAC and SIEC work group
This is a challenge due to the level of participation throughout the Commonwealth. Though the SIEC may do good work, its adoption throughout the state is often limited to those that regularly participate. Mandates would make it more effective but would create a host of other issues.
Increased communications and involvement directly with agency leadership and governmental leadership
Governance requires participation. Participation requires motivation. Motivation requires clear, achievable goals, plus leadership and a strategy to achieve them. Working that strategy toward success requires long-term, trans-Administration commitment of people and resources, not least funding. So, we don't just need a carrot (or a stick.) We need to bushwhack a garden plot, prepare the land, and plant the carrots. That's where we are right now.

In the four major technology areas (Land Mobile Radio, 911, Broadband, Alerts and Warnings) what must be done to enhance interoperability?
AWS
Finding a standard that applies to all and make it part of the plan to meet the listed code references. Also, provide access to STARS by local entities.
Most technology allows this level of interoperability, the issues is with politics and ownership of localities and agencies, or with untrained staff working the consoles
Standardization is the primary way, but mandating standards without funding to implement them is a challenge.

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Funding is the constant challenge that limits interoperability enhancements. The involvement of the leadership referenced in question 6 will improve the opportunities for the funding needed to adopt technologies and solutions that eliminate technical challenges to interoperability. The involvement of said leadership will also lead to greater understanding of the need for governance to support operational procedures that encourage and enable interoperability in voice and data communications.

In all these areas, the #6 answer about carrots will help us get to continuous leadership, realistic sustainment of funding and governance, and hopefully better interoperability.

Within the LMR and Broadband areas: We need to layout a vision/strategy for both, but also for their integration. Most importantly, we need to define our LMR goals and enroll people in them. If LMR becomes the car we know won't run much longer, we're not going to invest in it and we're going to move backward, not forward.

Alerts and warnings: This is not an area the SIEC has historically taken on, so we need to figure out where it fits.

In the five interoperability continuum categories (governance, standard operating procedures, technology, training & exercises, usage) what must be done to enhance interoperability?

Funding

Establishing the standard in more detail and providing the training/exercises on the standard using available tools.

SOP and Training are the areas that need the most attention in my opinion. The staff are untrained because of the lack of experience due to the nonexistence policies, especially in rural areas

Again, standardization and accountability are needed. If people do not adhere to the governance model, SOPs, participate in training/exercises, and use the solutions, then interoperability will forever be out of reach.

Governance: Increase communications with and involvement of agency leadership and legislators.
SOP's: Sharing of best practices and success stories through RPAC-I's, SIEC, and end user specific organizations.

Technology: Per SCIP, work with vendors to understand evolving technology landscape. Engage local and state legislators to encourage funding of effective technological interoperability solutions.

T&E: Work with OEC to create realistic exercises that encourage the increased involvement of public safety, public service, and when appropriate, commercial entities. Ensure that exercises address needs of smallest and largest agencies. Leverage RPAC-I's for collection of training needs and exercise ideas.

Usage: See previous responses on communications and involvement of agency leadership at multiple levels

We need to set some goals we can fit and communicate on one page or less and then work them until we move forward.

Specifically, we need to not only produce, but share (see 9-1-1 Services Board's RAC: They've produced a series of best practices for 91-1) and then teach. Once we have the outreach (based on the SCIP goals, strategies, etc.), we then communicate, but not just at the Fall Conference...we go to emergency managers, law/fire/EMS conferences/meetings, VML/VACO.... Enroll people in the vision,

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show them they can succeed, bring them to the table (and the tools and funding) and try to keep all the pieces moving in as much of the same direction as possible.
This is not the most helpful or specific answer, I realize....

Beyond funding, what barriers exist for enhancing interoperable communications?
Champion with governance authority
State and Local entities don't seem to be following a standard and don't seem to be using similar tools.
Lack of quality training and exercises for staff
There is a general lack of will to enhance interoperability. While nearly everyone supports it in theory, decisions are still made without interoperability being considered or at least prioritized with individual needs/desires.
Personnel levels, support plans for existing systems, siloed thinking.
The biggest single hindrance over my time in this process has been inconsistent governance and leadership. We've worked hard to put the right pieces and people in place, and I do believe we have them. Continuity (or the lack thereof) has always held us back. We need to build and sustain the SIEC as a body (as opposed to a collection of individuals, without whom nothing happens) and make it not just sustainable, but resilient in the face of changing Administrations if we want it (and our goals) to work.

What is your top public safety communications priority?
Developing SCIP
Having all COMLINC users at the same revision of software and maintain this
Situational awareness for incident responders and the ability to share information through voice and data
Next Generation 9-1-1 Implementation
Data applications and interoperability
Voice LMR interoperability, achievable any time, any place, and across/between any jurisdictions/agencies

If asked by an elected official, what would you want them to know about the status of public safety communications in Virginia?
Need for funding
It is still difficult for local entities to communicate with state entities due to a lack of STARS radios at the local level and disparate COMLINC software versions.
The technical ability exists, however the political issues with state and local governments are the roadblock to total interoperability
The day-to-day needs for public safety communications are pretty well covered, but a large-scale event would likely overwhelm our capability to manage communications because of a lack of commitment to solving the systemic problems.
That tremendous progress has been made in the past decade in improving public safety communications and enhancing interoperability in much of the Commonwealth, but that rapidly

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advancing technologies and citizen expectations leave us with no alternative to increasing funding for public safety communications, particularly in rural Virginia.
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It is high time to treat emergency communications (including 9-1-1, public safety voice and data communications, and critical state and local resources) as a co-equal branch of public safety in the Commonwealth. We simply cannot be successful in the field if we are not successful in the implementation, planning, and sustainment of critical communications systems, as well as the proper, NIMS-compliant, all-hazards communications planning and response disciplines.
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Additional comments, questions or concerns?

This needs to be a living document that allows the SIEC to make adjustments annually with measurable goals
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The 2011-2013 SCIPs introduced the concept of information sharing and data interoperability. This is still a critical need but is not an area the SIEC has given much attention. We probably need to broaden our membership or narrow our scope to take this on.
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